

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4325

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TAGS: ML, OEXC (DEMBELE, KOKE)
SUBJ: TRANSITIONAL QUARTER IV NOMINATION

1. EMBASSY NOMINATES KOKE DEMBELE, GOVERNOR VI REGION, REPUBLIC OF MALI, FOR 30-DAY IV GRANT FUNDED FROM TRANSITIONAL QUARTER ALLOCATION.

2. BIO DATA: DEMBELE IS A MAJOR IN THE MALIAN ARMY AND HAS SERVED AS GOVERNOR SINCE 1974. PRIOR TO THAT HE WAS COMMANDANT OF THE ECOLE MILITAIRE INTERARME AT KATI, COMMANDER OF THE PRESIDENTIAL GUARD, AND CHEF DE CABINET OF DEFENSE MINISTRY. HE WAS PROMOTED TO MAJOR IN JANUARY 1976; TO CAPTAIN OCTOBER 1, 1971. BEFORE INDEPENDENCE (1960) DEMBELE SERVED AS AN NCO IN THE FRENCH ARMY. HE SAW ACTION IN ALGERIA 1958-60. HE WAS BORN IN 1934 IN TOGO, NEAR BOLOMISSE.

3. DEMBELE IS MARRIED (NUMBER OF CHILDREN UNKNOWN), HOLDER OF FRENCH DECORATION CROIX DE LA VALEUR MILITAIRE, NO KNOWLEDGE OF ENGLISH, SPEAKS FLUENT FRENCH; DIETARY RESTRICTIONS AS FOR MUSLIMS--NO PORK, ETC., OTHERWISE NO APPARENT RESTRICTIONS. A FOREIGN MILITARY OFFICER WHO KNOWS DEMBELE CHARACTERIZED HIM AS HARDWORKING, ENERGETIC, OPEN MINDED AND INTELLIGENT.

4. JUSTIFICATION: DEMBELE WAS PICKED TO SUCCEED AN INCOMPETENT GOVERNOR WHO HAD PROVED UNABLE TO COORDINATE THE DELIVERY OF RELIEF SUPPLIES TO THE HARD-HIT VI REGION OF MALI DURING THE DROUGHT. BASED ON UNCLASSIFIED

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THIS EMBASSY'S DIRECT OBSERVATION OF DEMBELE, WE HAVE

CONCLUDED THAT HE IS COMPETENT, HONEST, AND A LEADER WITH A FUTURE.

5. AS THE SAHEL DEVELOPMENT FUND ENLARGES THE US SPHERE OF ACTION IN MALI, WE WILL BE MORE AND MORE INVOLVED WITH GOVERNOR DEMBELE SINCE HE GOVERNS THE POOREST AND MOST ISOLATED REGION, COMPRISING TIMBUCTOU AND GAO. HE HAS NEVER BEEN TO THE UNITED STATES BUT SHOWS A LIVELY INTEREST IN AMERICA, ITS PEOPLE AND THEIR TECHNOLOGY, PARTICULARLY IN DRY LAND AGRICULTURE. AN IV GRANT TO DEMBELE WOULD HELP THIS EMBASSY MEET ITS DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES IN MALI AND WOULD ALSO EXPOSE A KEY MALIAN LEADER TO AMERICAN SOCIETY AND AMERICAN VALUES.

6. BOTH DCM AND AID COUNTRY DEVELOPMENT OFFICER KNOW DEMBELE WELL. EMBASSY'S IV COMMITTEE WAS UNANIMOUS IN RECOMMENDATION.

7. PROGRAM SUGGESTIONS: WE BELIEVE DEMBELE COULD TRAVEL WITHIN TQ. SINCE HE IS GOVERNOR OF MALI'S MOST ARID REGION, HE SHOULD VISIT THE AMERICAN PLAINS OR SOUTHWEST TO OBSERVE ARID LANDS AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION SCHEMES. BECAUSE OF HIS MILITARY BACKGROUND, A COURTESY VISIT TO AN ARMY BASE WOULD BE IN ORDER. IN SUM, WE RECOMMEND A PROGRAM SIMILAR TO THAT DEVISED FOR GOVERNOR MAIGA BUT WITH CHANGES IN LOCALE TO SUGGEST THAT TOUR IS TAILORED TO DEMBELE'S INTERESTS.

DAWKINS

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